To the Notre Dame Family:

*Veni Sancte Spiritus*.  Come, Holy Spirit.

With these daily words of prayer, Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., implored the Holy Spirit to fill the hearts of the faithful and to kindle in us the fire of God’s love.  Last night, at the age of 97 and after 71 years of priestly ministry in the Congregation of Holy Cross, Father Ted has gone home to the Lord.  I extend my heartfelt condolences to the Hesburgh family, to my brothers and sisters in Holy Cross, to the University of Notre Dame family, and to all whose lives were touched and enriched by Father Ted’s remarkable life and ministry.

We welcome students, faculty, staff and the public to campus on Tuesday, March 3, and Wednesday, March 4, to celebrate Father Ted’s life. Classes after 12:20 p.m. on Wednesday are canceled.  The regular class schedule will resume on Thursday. Visitation is open to all, from noon through 6 p.m. Tuesday, resuming at 9 p.m. Tuesday through 10 a.m. Wednesday in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart. A funeral Mass, with reserved seating, will be held at 2 p.m. Wednesday in the Basilica. All are welcome to join the procession after Mass to Holy Cross Community Cemetery. Doors will open at 6 p.m. Wednesday for a ticketed memorial commemoration at the Purcell Pavilion at 7:30 p.m.

Father Ted served as the 15th president of the University of Notre Dame from 1952 until his retirement in 1987.  He was one of the nation's most influential figures in higher education, the Catholic Church and national and international affairs.  While serving four Popes and accepting 16 presidential appointments, Father Ted was a moral force in virtually all major social issues of his day, including civil rights, peaceful uses of atomic energy, campus unrest, treatment of Vietnam draft evaders, third-world development and immigration reform.

Next to Notre Dame’s founder, Father Edward Sorin, C.S.C., no one has had a greater impact on the University than Father Ted.  With his appointments to the faculty, his creation of great centers and institutes for scholarship and research, his commitment to our Catholic character, and most of all his leadership, charisma and vision, he turned what was a school well-known for football into one of the nation’s great institutions for higher learning.  Of his many accomplishments at the University, Father Ted was particularly proud of Notre Dame’s admission of women to the undergraduate program beginning under his leadership in 1972.

For me personally, Father Ted was a brother in Holy Cross, a mentor, a friend and a model of what a priest should be.  I think of his example every day I serve as Notre Dame’s president.  Although saddened by his death, I take consolation in knowing he is now in the company of heaven praying for all of us.

Yours in Notre Dame,

Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C.